# Rural Public Drinking Water Access Consultation

# What We Heard

source source source

106-01298/

# Rural Public Drinking Water Access Consultations
## "What We Heard"

**Index Key**

**1.0 Introduction**

**2.0 Background**

**3.0 Consultation Process**

**4.0 Summary#1: Summary of the Consultations as they relate to Proposed Rural Drinking Water Strategy Components**

**4.1 Increasing Our Knowledge About Yukon's Water Resources**

**4.2 Developing Our Infrastructure Priorities**

**4.3 Education and Public Outreach**

**4.4 Partnerships, Collaboration and Planning among Yukon's Water Managers**

**4.5 Developing Guidelines, Service and Infrastructure Standards**

**4.6 Policy and Regulatory Development**

**5.0 Summary#2: Summary of the Consultations by Community**

**APPENDIX A: Consultation Brochure**

## 1.0 Introduction

Yukoners seemingly have access to some of the most pristine water in Canada. While the Yukon is endowed with good surface water and groundwater resources, clean looking water and good quality drinking water are not necessarily one in the same.

> *Definition: For the purposes of this document; Rural is defined as outside municipal boundaries and off settlement and reserve land.*

As rural populations have grown and expanded beyond municipal boundaries, pressure on existing water infrastructure has increased and gaps in service and accessibility have developed. Between February and April 2005, the Department of Community Services led a community consultation to hear from rural Yukoners about these gaps. The consultations were primarily fact finding to identify Yukon-wide and community-specific needs, get a sense of what is important to rural Yukoners, and collect their ideas and solutions to providing affordable access to safe drinking water.

What we heard through these consultations and background research and analysis carried out by Community Services staff will provide the foundation for the development of a Rural Drinking Water Strategy. This Strategy will link and impact other Yukon Government departments, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), First Nations, municipalities, industry and individual Yukoners and will provide a comprehensive guide to drinking water initiatives and infrastructure throughout rural Yukon over the next five years.

Community Services staff were encouraged by the broad extent of the issues brought forth and the innovative ideas and solutions that were discussed with consultation participants. This paper reports on both the issues and gaps; and the ideas and solutions. Comments have been organized into two summaries:

- By priority areas to be developed in the Strategy to allow the public to assess the responsiveness of the Strategy; and
- By community so that participants can assess whether we clearly heard their key messages.

> *Disclaimer: The summaries of the consultation contain the opinions expressed by those who attended the public consultations and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Yukon Government. We have tried to include all points of view expressed as part of the discussions and the major and/ or repetitive issues/ comments raised in the meetings.*

## 2.0 Background

Managing drinking water is a cooperative effort between all levels of government, industry and stakeholders, including individual Yukoners. Access to drinking water and cost of drinking water is different in each Yukon community. Generally, rural Yukoners access drinking water through trucked water delivery, private wells; self haul from community wells and store-bought bottled water. The cost of water to rural Yukoners is variable as communities and private industry use different methods to calculate fees based on their operation and maintenance costs, capital improvement costs, costs associated with meeting drinking water regulations and fuel costs. As well, subsidies may exist in some locations.

Within Yukon Government (YG) a number of departments play a role in the overall management of drinking water systems:

- Community Services, Community Development Branch currently manages seven community drinking water supplies and manages or contracts out four trucked water delivery operations
- Health and Social Services, Environmental Health Services Branch regulates Drinking Water Quality in the Yukon
- Environment, Water Resources Branch administers water-related policies, regulations and programs under the *Waters Act*.
- Highways and Public Works, Property Management Agency and Yukon Housing Corporation develops and operates water systems for Yukon Government-owned facilities in communities throughout the Yukon

The roles of other levels of government can vary in each community but generally:

- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) provide a funding and advisory role to First Nation communities to ensure safe drinking water.
- Most First Nations, both self-governing and non-self-governing, manage all or part of their water supply and distribution (trucked, private wells) to their members. Some First Nations also provide public drinking water access points for self haul and trucked water services for rural Yukoners.
- Municipalities manage the water supply and distribution (piped, trucked) within municipal boundaries (this may include First Nation communities). Some municipalities also provide public drinking water access points for self haul and trucked water services for rural Yukoners.

It is estimated that there are approximately 2,000 private wells in the Yukon. Yukoners with private systems, i.e. wells and/ or water holding tanks are responsible for the operation and maintenance, testing and treatment of their individual systems and all Yukoners are responsible for managing our drinking water resources by ensuring they do not contaminate the source.

**3.0 Consultation Process**

The consultation was led by Community Services staff; one representative from Community Affairs and one from Engineering, Development and Operations. The INAC First Nation Water Management Strategy engineer also participated in the majority of the meetings to demonstrate and facilitate a cooperative effort between two levels of government that have some level of responsibility for providing safe drinking water to rural Yukoners.

A consultation brochure (reference Appendix A) was mailed out to all rural Yukon households. It provided guiding principles, general questions, and explained the consultation intent. Consultation schedules for public meetings were posted in both the Whitehorse Star and Yukon News throughout the consultation period and brochures and schedules were mailed to municipal and First Nation offices for posting.

Public meetings were held in 21 communities throughout the Yukon. The meetings were loosely structured; beginning with information collection about local demographics, existing water sources, access and types of water uses; then followed by a discussion about what is working, key issues, ideas and solutions to gaps or challenges. The general issue areas targeted infrastructure, education, policy and guidelines and mechanisms for better collaboration among Yukon water managers. The meetings were concluded with an opportunity for each participant to express their top priority or key issue.

Two other related initiatives were discussed during consultations:

1. Rural Domestic Water Well Program
   - This program is underway, for more information visit the following website: http://www.gov.yk.ca/depts/community/property/ruralwaterwell.html
2. Public Web-based Groundwater Well Database
   - Joint initiative between Water Resources and Community Services
   - This program is expected to be available on line in Fall 2005

In addition, another 28 informal meetings were held with First Nations, Yukon municipalities and industry namely, private water haulers, water industry engineering/ hydro-geological consultants, well drillers and water treatment specialists. There are four private sector water hauling operations in the Yukon. As well, engineering/ hydro-geological consultants, well drillers and water treatment specialists play a critical role in designing and providing drinking water infrastructure across the Yukon. These meetings identified issues, solutions and opportunities for improved collaboration in drinking water management.

Community Services also hosted a website on Rural Drinking Water (http://www.community.gov.yk.ca/landdevelopment/rpdwa.html) and received about 20 submissions by e-mail and phone.

In total, based on the 49 meetings, e-mails and phone calls, approximately 225 Yukoners participated in the consultation.

The public meetings, phone calls and e-mails provide the content for this document. Notes from each meeting with First Nations and Yukon Municipalities will be distributed to the respective First Nation or Municipality with copies of this document to share with their communities. Any additional comments on this document can be forwarded by e-mail to waterstrategy@gov.yk.ca.

## 4.0 Summary#1: Summary of the Consultations as they relate to Proposed Rural Drinking Water Strategy Components

This first summary of the consultations is by priority areas to be developed in the Rural Drinking Water Strategy.

### 4.1 Increasing Our Knowledge About Yukon's Water Resources

> "There is a perception that air and water are always free."
> "The most important thing is water and keeping it safe and clean."

- Overall Yukoners suggested there is a lack of knowledge and poor communication about the state of surface water and groundwater resources in the Yukon.
- They emphasized the need to make the connection between protecting our drinking water sources by understanding and mapping potential contaminants.
- YG should focus on collecting water resource knowledge, public education and information dissemination.

Information Needs

> "Make water quality testing and protection a priority for all Yukoners."

- The public admits they have an inadequate level of knowledge about groundwater and surface water resources, potential contaminants, water source locations and impacts of certain activities near a water source.
- YG should make information on surface water and groundwater quality testing, monitoring and analysis easily accessible and available to the public.
- Overall, the Groundwater Well Database is recognized as a good first step to improve public access to information about existing wells.
- People need educational information so that they can make better decisions about drilling a well or where they can access safe drinking water.

Source Protection

> "You need to make people aware that their private wells are drawing from a common source of water and they are all responsible for its management. Every resident with a well has an impact by having a potential source of contamination and/or potentially drawing down the source beyond recharge rates."

- It was generally agreed that source protection plans for aquifers and watersheds and well head protection plans need to be developed for groundwater and surface water sources.
- In a number of communities, people are concerned about possible groundwater and surface water contamination from septic fields, fuel storage, old dump sites from the construction of the Alaska Highway, and spring runoff from landfills.
- YG needs to communicate, through watershed planning, monitoring and mitigation plans of possible contamination sites to the communities to assure them that their water source is being protected.
- A number of people in different communities were concerned about the number of wells tapping into one aquifer and the impact of a larger community or commercially accessible (high use) wells on an aquifer.

### 4.2 Developing Our Infrastructure Priorities

Access to Drinking Water

> "The issue of drinking water access in rural areas boils down to knowledge and choice."
>
> "If your power goes out you can light candles. There is nothing romantic about running out of water."
>
> "Living out here because there is a lack of options and choice, I feel like I'm a hostage to the water haulers. Water prices are extremely vulnerable to changing government regulations and fuel prices."

- Choice is important; individuals do not want to rely on one source of water, namely water delivery.
- Most communities on trucked water delivery do not want the provision of safe drinking water to be left up to the private sector – they think YG has to remain involved in some capacity and a combination of government/private sector is probably best.
- A few communities reported that they do not have a safe, reliable community water source.
- Water is an essential need so its provision should be an essential service.
- Water usage increases with accessibility; i.e. a person on piped water will use more water than a person on trucked water delivery and a person that self hauls will conserve more water than someone on trucked or piped.

Community Water Sources

> "A community well has to be 'on the way home' to be useful."
>
> "We have a large community and large lake. We need to harness this resource to make it safe and accessible."
>
> "People like their tea better using water from local creeks and the lake. It doesn't have a film on it."
>
> "We have nowhere to go, as far as safe drinking water goes. Half of town drinks bottled water."

- Some communities indicated that if they had access to a safe source of water; they would take care of their own delivery.
- Self hauling water is not an option for everyone - seniors and the physically disabled.
- A number of suggestions were made to use surface water as a drinking water supply since it is a prevalent resource in many communities and surface water often tastes better than groundwater.
- Many reported that existing municipal and YG community fill points have safety and access issues with the fill area and equipment and require upgrades.
- Communities want input on the location of future community wells.
- Some reported that the fire hall/community well combination can cause well capacity, protocol and safety issues.
- A number of suggestions were made to have non-chlorinated water available at community self-serve wells for non-potable uses such as gardening.
- There is some interest in shared private wells to make well drilling cost effective although ownership and other legal issues currently act as a barrier.
- Some communities suggested that piped water systems may be feasible for communities where lot sizes are smaller and populations denser.
- It was also suggested that YG should explore innovative solutions to community water infrastructure such as low pressure or above ground piped water systems (for summer use only).

<u>Commercially-accessible wells (Fill points that can be accessed by private water haulers)</u>

- In the Whitehorse area, there were some suggestions that strategically located commercially-accessible wells would help reduce water hauling rates.
- Generally, Whitehorse water hauling companies support the idea of additional fill points; however they would like input regarding location and design.
- Several people raised concerns regarding the impact of high capacity wells on aquifers and want assurance that any potential negative impacts would be investigated prior to drilling commercially-accessible wells in their community.
- Many people were skeptical that additional commercially-accessible wells would result in a reduction in water haul prices and would like some assurance of a rate reduction and price stability before YG invests in new supply points.
- The general consensus was that self haul access at any commercial well sites should be provided.
- There were a few suggestions that the private sector should drive this type of infrastructure initiative to ensure they are committed to serving their clientele.
- There was general support for some form of cost recovery by YG for private sector use of commercial water fill points.

Water Distribution

> "Everyone in this community has a pick up truck with a tank or blue jugs for hauling water"
> "There is no pleasure in hauling your own water."
> "Water delivery limits the quality of life"
> "Municipal delivery is very reliable and appreciated."
> "Water delivery is an excellent service: They deliver safe water to your door, support fire back up and even flood the rink once in a while."

- There were a significant number of people who said they enjoyed hauling their own water and compared it to the satisfaction of hauling and chopping your own wood. However, the majority of people suggested they would choose not to if there was an affordable alternative.
- Some people suggested that they would continue to haul water for gardening and other non-potable uses even if water delivery or well drilling was more affordable.
- Many self haulers and individuals on water delivery commented that self haul and trucked water delivery promote water conservation and the notion that water is not 'free' – this was viewed as positive to some and negative to others.
- Comments regarding water delivery, especially in the Whitehorse area, ranged from water delivery as a good, convenient service to suggestions they would do anything to get off water delivery.
- Whitehorse area residents on trucked water delivery expressed concerns on the inflexibility of the delivery schedule, per delivery charges instead of actual volume charges, challenges in keeping driveway clear during the winter and high and variable fees that are vulnerable to increasing fuel prices and changing government regulations.
- In many communities, the concerns expressed about drinking delivered water were often more to do with issues with storage tanks or chlorine levels not the method of delivery.
- There were a few comments that YG should get out of the water delivery business.
- Some suggested that YG should provide emergency water supply back up in the form of water trucks.

### 4.3 Education and Public Outreach

Public Education Needs

> "It would be great to have one stop service for well and water quality information."
> "It is difficult to clean your water tank when you don't have running water for rinsing it."
> "There are a lot of unsafe wells out there."
> "The homeowners blindly trust in the drillers without having any guidelines or education tools to rely on."
> "I had no idea about our water system, where it (drinking water) came from, treatment. This meeting has been helpful."

- There was a consistent, common message that there is a lack of information available on drinking water and related items.
- There was a general message that YG take a lead in developing educational materials with input from other governments and agencies.
- Suggestions for public education needs included: well drilling and risks, questions to ask your driller, well construction and upgrade guidelines, well maintenance and record keeping, storage tank cleaning, source protection , home water management, water quality testing requirements, explanation of the Canadian Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality (CGDWQ), water treatment alternatives, water conservation and water-efficient design, how to flush hot water tanks and storage tank housing guidelines.
- Suggestions for public education methods included: YG fund a home water "inspector" who makes home visits and provides maintenance, upgrade and water testing advice and information (e.g. similar to a home energy audit service); one stop website for well information; communications campaign; make water testing and water system maintenance routine for people—could send out information with property tax information; homeowner workshops; and water maintenance checklist and holder for storage with other maintenance booklets.

Operator Training and Capacity Building

- Suggestions that small municipalities do not have the capacity to deal with complex systems.
- Suggestions that INAC and YG share resources to provide expertise such as a circuit rider to support both First Nations and municipalities

Rural Living means Natural Conservation

"Living with water delivery and being dependent on your own well is self-metering. You are aware of how much water you use and where you use it."

"We never had to think about where to get our drinking water. Coming from the big city we never had to think about it."

"We've been fumbling along with trying to improve our water supply for a long time. One of us has to be there for the water truck to pass the hose through the bedroom window into the tank."

Water Quality

"The smell of the water around here knocks you flat."

"My tank gets cleaned when I can't see the bottom."

"I came here because I had a concern about our town water."

"We want to see some long range planning especially regarding chlorine alternatives to see 'sustainable water treatment' and alternatives to chemicals."

"People don't drink water from storage tanks. They don't trust the 'big bin.' They don't like chlorine. It causes a film on their tea."

"Chlorine is an issue for people in our community but we realize that we need safe drinking water."

- The issue of chlorination varied in many communities: some communities and many individuals are adamantly opposed to chlorination; others believe that the positives outweigh the negatives; many complained about the taste of chlorinated water; and there was a general interest in information about alternatives to chlorine disinfection.
- It was noted that Yukon groundwater tends to be hard and there are reports of siltation (mainly) in the spring, mineralization, calcification, staining, sulfur smell and discolouration.
- Some communities reported such poor water quality that many area wells were not potable without a significant investment in water treatment.
- There were reports in a number of communities of earthquakes affecting well water quality.
- It was suggested that YG should be doing more water quality testing and reporting to the public.

### 4.4 Partnerships, Collaboration and Planning among Yukon's Water Managers

"There needs to be better cooperation between governments."

"Living where we do, we've had to develop a strategy of back-ups, through neighbours etc. We've created choices."

"Yukon Government and the First Nation should come together for water."

"Our community works well together – First Nation and non-First Nation because we promote community."

"We need to tie water infrastructure into land use planning."

- There is excellent cooperation in some communities; and in others, it is divisive making infrastructure planning difficult.
- In some communities, better cooperation among governments, particularly between First Nations and municipal governments, on water management issues is required.
- Communities suggested that YG provide emergency back up services.
- Some interest for governments to pursue cooperation and/or service agreements.

### 4.5 Developing Guidelines, Service and Infrastructure Standards

"Well guidelines must be a part of this strategy."

- Homeowners indicated a need for well standards and guidelines.

### 4.6 Policy and Regulatory Development

Yukon Government Role

> "It's important that water become a project for all governments."
>
> "Guarantee fresh, potable water access for all Yukoners."

- Views ranged from water is a basic and essential need and YG must play a stronger role to people who choose to live in rural areas must be prepared for a more self-reliant lifestyle and cannot depend on YG.
- First Nation communities see the role of YG as mainly funding support and education.
- A few people suggested that YG take on a facilitative role with respect to funding support and education.

Cost of Drinking Water

> "We haul from the community well because we have to. We can't afford water delivery. "
>
> "The cost of drinking water is a major consideration for rural residents."
>
> "The problem is that costs are only going up in some communities and extremely low in communities where Yukon Government provides delivery. That's unacceptable. We need a level playing field."
>
> "It's not the cost of water. It's the cost of supplying safe water."

- Self haulers have the cost of owning their own equipment, i.e. truck and water tank, cost for time and fuel and cost of water at some community fill points.
- Many consider the cost to drill a well too expensive and risky i.e. they may not encounter water or there may be additional costs for treatment.
- In some areas, the cost of water delivery is not affordable, the costs are variable and affected by rising fuel costs and changing drinking water regulations.
- Some referenced the cost discrepancies in communities that YG is involved in water delivery due to subsidies.
- Some suggested that YG should provide a territory-wide subsidy for safe drinking water since it is a basic need.
- Another suggestion was that YG 'cushion' the impact of new government regulations to control rising costs of water delivery.
- Additional costs discussed were maintenance of water system due to hard water (ground water) and buying bottled water to supplement poor quality water.
- Communities do not want new water infrastructure to result in a tax increase.

- Other views were that people who choose to live in rural areas should be responsible for any additional costs incurred to access safe drinking water.

Regulations

> "You need to enforce source protection to really deter source contamination."
> "Government needs better knowledge of aquifer capacity before their use can be regulated."
> "We'd like to see well permitting required in the Yukon. We would like to see regulations protecting aquifers."

- There was a lack of knowledge and confusion about what standards, regulations, guidelines, well drilling certification criteria are in place for well drilling.
- Many people expressed concerns that well permits and standards to ensure proper installation in order to protect our aquifers are not required to drill a well.
- Although a number of people expressed a desire for tougher standards and regulations, many people expressed concern that additional government regulations may cause an increased cost to property owners interested in drilling new wells - these costs must be assessed before any decisions are passed.
- Many people pointed to large gaps in accessible information and education available to rural homeowners about water supply choices and water management in the home, indicating that education must come first, then regulations.
- The public is concerned that possible contamination sources on private property such as septic fields, sewage holding tanks, fuel storage and well head protection are not regulated.

Rural Well Program

> "The well program should have been focused on reducing the risk associated with well drilling."
> "If there was no risk I would apply for the well program for sure. As is, I wouldn't consider it."

- Some property owners that may qualify for the program are concerned with the cost of drilling a well, the risk associated with drilling a well and the absence of a guarantee against a failed well – they suggested that YG could address these concerns by revising the Rural Well Program to include a guarantee against failed wells.
- Some property owners within municipal boundaries expressed an interest in the program and asked YG for assistance to deal with the maximum municipal debt ratio.
- Drilling a well for some people is just not affordable, even with the Rural Well Program.
- Some people were concerned about the increase in well drilling and the impacts on aquifers.

- A small percentage of rural residents do not have electricity so there would be additional costs associated with the installation of a private well.

## 5.0 Summary#2: Summary of the Consultations by Community

This second summary of consultations is by community in alphabetical order. If attendance was low or the topic was not discussed the note 'limited participation by community' will appear in the columns.

| Community | Water Source | Comments on Water Source & Quality | Key Issues | Priority Solutions/Suggestions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beaver Creek | -private wells | LIMITED PARTICIPATION BY COMMUNITY | | |
| Burwash Landing & Destruction Bay | Burwash Landing<br>-water delivery in Burwash Landing<br>-some private wells<br><br>Destruction Bay<br>-"1/2 the town" drinks Bottled water<br>-unfiltered lake water pumped or hauled by truck<br>-some private wells<br>-limited community access at the school | Burwash Landing:<br>-Kluane First Nation (KFN) manages community water supply and provides trucked delivery and tank cleaning service<br><br>Destruction Bay:<br>-tourists have access to well at lodge<br>-well depth range: 100' to >300'<br>-local wells produce poor quality water—high siltation, sulfurous, mineralization (hard)—and require shock chlorination often | Burwash Landing<br>-no issues<br><br>Destruction Bay:<br>-no reliable community source for drinking water<br>-residents are drinking untreated water from the lake year-round<br>-the real cost of water is 'phenomenal' if you have to buy bottled and haul it yourself from the lake in the winter<br>-limited access to any information about drinking water<br>-Area wells have gone dry after earthquakes | Burwash Landing:<br>-none.<br><br>Destruction Bay:<br>-would like to see community well, preferably at community hall<br>-KFN would consider delivery to DBay (do deliver to some residents) but many residents may not want to pay. KFN mentioned that delivery would not be possible on extremely cold days in the winter.<br>-public education re: source protection, well drilling, water quality testing and tank cleaning |
| Carcross | -YG-owned community system is surface water source (Lake Bennett)<br>-majority on YG-provided, subsidized water delivery<br>-few private wells | -some area wells reported 50' to 80'; one well reported at 80 gpm<br>-residents had private, mostly shallow dug wells until mid-1980s (now on delivery)<br>-other water uses include gardening | -some existing unmapped septic fields<br>-water delivery doesn't extend to periphery e.g. Emerald and Crag Lakes<br>-tank cleaning reportedly done intermittently at best | -continue YG service and subsidy<br>-turn current water truck operator, who is reliable, into a YG employee |
| Carmacks | -trucked water delivery<br>-private wells, self haul | LIMITED PARTICIPATION BY COMMUNITY | | |
| Dawson | -self haul from City fill point, fire hall, Rock Creek firehall, RV park, friends with piped water<br>-water delivery<br>-private wells<br>-rainwater (roof) collection for non-potable uses<br>-some creeks (Sweed, Dawson) | -Klondike Valley has many shallow wells<br>-wells range in depth from 18' to 20', high mineralization, magnesium, calcium deposits and a sulphur smell<br>-other water uses included: gardening, farming, 3 greenhouse operations, golf course, city street spraying for dust control, property watering for fire protection and bleeders for City piped system | West Dawson:<br>-residents have to cross the river to access safe drinking water (break up/freeze can last 3 weeks)<br>Klondike Valley :<br>-valley is prone to flooding<br>-lots of shallow wells<br>-unknown (but assumed to be high) number of small unmapped industrial, fuel and historical contamination sites<br>-concern that there may be "unregulated" outhouses, septic fields and sewage holding tanks (e.g. holes in tanks) | West Dawson:<br>-look at options for more accessible and affordable water supply<br>-source protection for the entire Klondike Valley – map out contamination sources, water supply points, flow regime etc.<br>-"Education with a fist" – need education and enforcement together<br>-regulations that would enforce private sewage holding tanks e.g. show proof of regular pump outs of holding tanks<br>-regulate well installation |

| Community | Water Source | Comments on Water Source & Quality | Key Issues | Priority Solutions/Suggestions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | -high cost of water treatment<br>-would like to see well program within municipal boundaries<br>-no one in the private sector service for tank cleaning | -more water testing and water quality reporting<br>-public education: storage tank cleaning, well head protection, well guidelines |
| Deep Creek | -private wells<br>-water delivery<br>-self serve from Horse Creek, Gruberville, Whitehorse | -well water is hard<br>-private wells are deep or surface water wells | -cost of water delivery<br>-cost of drilling wells | -access to community well between Deep Creek and Whitehorse |
| Golden Horn | -some self haul from Wolf Creek in summer<br>-rainwater collection for gardening<br>-water delivery<br>-private wells<br>-some self haul from Whitehorse and area creeks | -suggested area wells tend to be 120' with silty and hard but good quality water<br>-softener and filter required for many private wells | -cost and risk of drilling private well<br>-high and variable cost, inflexible delivery schedule and dependency on water delivery<br>-cost differential for water delivery between Carcross and Golden Horn and other areas<br>-poor aquifer knowledge and protection – concern of contamination from septic fields and other sources<br>-fire hazard because of poor water access | -re-vamp well program so YG assume some risk and provide guarantee for failed wells<br>-YG fund water and well expertise to help rural home owners make better decisions re: well drilling, maintenance and source protection<br>-more work needs to be done to ensure the integrity of aquifers with increasing use<br>-consider a local commercial fill point for water haulers<br>-YG should cushion water hauling rate hikes associated with regulatory changes<br>-any new well drilling regulations should consider associated costs that may be passed on to homeowner<br>-public education re: tank cleaning and questions to ask your driller |
| Haines Junction | -HJ Municipal fill point<br>-self haul from HJ Municipal fill point —24 regular users<br>-commercial water delivery<br>-private wells | -private wells in Bear Creek – 40' to 60' and good quality water<br>-Pine Lake wells tend to be variable depth in bed rock and low flow<br>-Willow Creek wells tend to be deep, low flow and poorer quality | -YG needs to do a much better job getting well & water quality information out to the public<br>-outstanding issues with the Well Program including municipalities debt ratio limits<br>-small municipalities don't have capacity or expertise to deal with many water quality issues<br>-need better cooperation among governments on water management<br>-concern that new regulations could put local private sector water hauler out of business<br>-some residents can't afford wells or water delivery (in some areas drilling is too risky) | -YG and INAC cooperate on one circuit rider to provide testing, montoring and technical support to all communities<br>-YG provide a one-stop shop for water information and key contacts for information<br>-YG could provide training and info to individuals for cleaning tanks, maintaining wells etc.<br>-consider a program for low-income residents to address high cost of water (well or trucked delivery) for residents<br>-upgrades to HJ fill point so hoses don't touch the ground |
| Ibex Valley (2 meetings held) | -10-15 people regularly get water from Ibex fire hall<br>-some self haul from Little Sweetwater Creek | -private wells range in depth (125' to 900') and quality<br>-fire hall is 47' deep<br>-Old Alaska Hwy area has wells @ 175' | -alternatives to water delivery<br>-dependency on trucked delivery and associated responsibilities like keeping driveway clear<br>-tank cleaning challenges – access, safety and | -divided opinions on the need for community well – but best location would be the fire hall<br>-need one stop shop for well information<br>-need campaign to make water testing and |

| Community | Water Source | Comments on Water Source & Quality | Key Issues | Priority Solutions/Suggestions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -water delivery<br>-private wells<br>-some self haul from Whitehorse, area creeks, Ibex fire hall<br>-River water for agricultural uses | with good quality water<br>-other water uses include 2 commercial greenhouse operations, dog mushing and some agriculture | equipment needed | water system maintenance routine for people; could send out information with property tax information |
| Keno City | -2 other private wells<br>-YG community well (at fire hall) and trucked delivery<br>-year-round creek | -Community well is 314', good water quality and flow | -the water truck too large for the community<br>-truck drivers are often out of town for work<br>-need more help with maintenance of water system<br>-storage too large for demand which results in stagnant water<br>-pipe to wash house froze in January<br>-community hall/wash house septic field backed up | -prefer a simpler system with a smaller truck<br>-would like fill point outside of fire hall for self hauling<br>-training available locally rather than traveling to Whitehorse |
| Marsh Lake | -self haul from Whitehorse<br>-private water delivery<br>-rainwater (roof) collection for non-potable uses<br>-few shared private wells<br>-Judas Ck self haul community well serves south end residents<br>-Marsh Lake summer and year-round (lake use increased with cost of truck hauling) | -Judas Ck: good quality wells range from 48'(marina), 64' near lake front and 110'-130'<br>-M'Clintock Place: one person drilled without success, not known whether any other wells are in area<br>-Grayling Place: mineralized water with good flow at depths of 180' and 688'<br>-M'Clintock Valley: 3-4 wells at 300'<br>-Army Beach: only drilled well is at the campground/day use area ~400'<br>-S. M'Clintock has shared artesian wells (~400')<br>-New Constabulary: depth/quality pretty good, one well at 120'<br>-most area wells use water softeners<br>-other water uses include: gardening, fire protection (property soaking), some small-scale farm w/ animals, few ice rinks | -lack of access/choice in north end of Marsh Lake<br>-water delivery price shock and schedule constraints<br>-private wells need to become more affordable and accessible<br>-database is a good first step to understand our water resources but much more needs to be done.<br>-safety and drainage issues at the Judas Creek community well<br>-contamination sources: septic fields from neighbours especially with many small lots in area; spring run off around dump; highway run off<br>-surface water quality testing | -need for north end well and fire satellite station<br>-Well Program—YG needs to really look at reducing risk for homeowner<br>-source protection—need to develop source/aquifer protection plans with increased monitoring<br>-examine commercial fill station but perhaps private haulers should drive the initiative: more information needed to ensure: it would be well-used, that hauling prices will decrease<br>-consider future piped system in Marsh Lake since small lots could make it feasible<br>-public education and awareness programs re: well drilling, storage tank cleaning, water efficiency design—home & landscape, water efficient technologies/hardware, conservation<br>-address legal issues to make shared wells more accessible |
| Mayo | -piped water system<br>-self haul, trucked water delivery<br>-private wells | LIMITED PARTICIPATION BY COMMUNITY | -main concern was the lack of water sampling of the surface water in the area | - |
| Mendenhall | -community-owned community well<br>-6-7 private wells | -reported private wells range from 165' to 200' deep with 6-8 gpm flow rates and very hard water | -community well requires upgrades to the fill system– hoses touch the ground, poor drainage, need new pump & upgrades to the building | -self-hauling is a good match for independent spirit of community<br>-contribution for community well upgrades |

| Community | Water Source | Comments on Water Source & Quality | Key Issues | Priority Solutions/Suggestions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -1 private surface spring<br>-potential water delivery by CAFN<br>-most people have pick up truck and tank or blue jugs<br>-self-haul from community well, Stoney Creek, Mendenhall Creek, some from Whitehorse<br>-bottled water for drinking | -one well reported at ~300' with softer water<br>-other water uses include gardening, some dog teams, farm animals<br>-community well is not chlorinated | -some community members are adamantly opposed to chlorination which will be required under new EHS regulation for the community well<br>-community well capacity likely an issue once the firehall is operational | -some would like to see an alternative to chlorination disinfection<br>-public education re: private well maintenance and water quality testing, means to reduce water use (conservation), alternatives to chlorination<br>-community may want to pursue YG taking over management of community well |
| Mount Lorne | -water delivery<br>-private wells<br>-some self haul from Whitehorse, area creeks, Mt Lorne Community Centre | -Cowley Creek reported to have wells 200' -300' deep<br>-Annie Lake road area known depths are 20' and 65'<br>-other water uses include agriculture, gardening and dog mushing | -truck hauling price are shocking as a result of Highway Regulations (that targeted an essential service)<br>-increasing accessibility to water will likely also increase water demand<br>-lot of area residents do not have electricity which limits the private well option (cannot run the pump) | -community well, if situated properly ("on the way home") would probably be well used<br>-preference would be a community well separate to a fire hall to avoid protocol issues<br>-likely not a big demand for a commercial well accessible to water haulers<br>-public education re: water quality testing, specifically uranium, tank cleaning and well drilling |
| Old Crow | -trucked water delivery | LIMITED PARTICIPATION BY THE COMMUNITY | | |
| Pelly Crossing | -private wells<br>-neighbour wells<br>-trucked water delivery to John Ra subdivision | -most wells are poor quality | -concern with the possible contamination of the aquifer and source protection by buried fuel tans and the new dump<br>-old community well in the Village needs to be decommissioned | -currently working on the design of a low flow low pressure piped system for the Village area<br>-interest in aquifer mapping and water sampling |
| Ross River | -trucked water delivery | LIMITED PARTICIPATION BY THE COMMUNITY | | |
| Tagish | -YG community self-serve well<br>-CTFN truck haul service<br>-surface water– Hunka Creek, Tagish Lake and Tagish River | -Tagish Estates: well depths 35-50', one artesian well capped because of high arsenic<br>-Taku – 96' well & good quality<br>-California Beach- one well 28'<br>-CTFN well-300'<br>-campground well- 400' capped because of arsenic levels<br>-few reports of regular treatment of surface water sources<br>-high arsenic levels<br>-YG community well has water quality issues and line ups on summer weekends | -water is a basic need—YG needs to play a stronger role<br>-recent CTFN price increases and past summer break in service<br>-lack of fairness and cost disparity between FNs and non-FNs in Tagish; and Carcross (subsidized by YG) and Tagish (not subsidized by YG)<br>-cost disparity in Tagish becoming a cause for community divisions<br>-security of service and price uncertainty<br>-regular power failures in the area<br>-community centre can no longer afford water delivery<br>-some areas do not have access to water hauling<br>-Well Program does not address risk issue and | -immediate need - YG should provide targeted support to offset water costs for seniors and physically disabled<br>-address the cost issue for water delivery i.e. the subsidy & FN issue and make it fair for everyone<br>-coordinate a service agreement between CTFN and YG to provide emergency back up<br>-YG and private sector to work together for a solution to water access<br>-water access solutions should not be linked to tax hikes<br>-look at "Old Town Solution" – above ground summer piped system<br>-need reliable well at community centre |

| Community | Water Source | Comments on Water Source & Quality | Key Issues | Priority Solutions/Suggestions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | therefore does not address need<br>-some lots are too small for septic field and a well | |
| Teslin | -private wells: 6 at cottage lots<br>-municipal water delivery in Teslin and recently to Cottage Lots<br>-surface sources—Teslin River (Johnson Crossing residents) and Teslin Lake,<br>-rainwater (roof) collection for non-potable uses | -cottage lots wells range in depth from 50' to 300'<br>-municipal well is 51' deep & has hard water<br>-reports of limited treatment for private sources<br>-Municipality runs water source and trucked delivery system<br>-other water uses include: small scale agriculture | -expand source protection<br>-increased and publicly available surface water quality testing<br>-there is no public fill point or self serve community well in the Teslin area<br>-very difficult to access Teslin River for water in the winter (this is Johnson Crossing residents primary source for water)<br>-concerns about contamination from run off from old Hwy dumps in area | -community well in Johnson's Crossing<br>-community well in that Cottage Lots area that would also serve as fire protection<br>-source protection for surface waters – namely Teslin Lake and river<br>-YG provide back up to municipal water truck<br>-YG provide more monitoring (chemical & bacteriological testing) of the quality of the surface water<br>-YG reduce risk under well drilling program |
| Watson Lake | -Municipal fill point for self hauling<br>-LFN truck delivery service<br>-piped water supply<br>-private wells (within municipality)<br>-local creeks | -Canyon Blvd—well depth starts @72' and drops<br>-South of Hwy—well depths ~190'<br>-Town Supply – well depth @ 30'<br>-Other water uses include 2 local greenhouses, couple of farms, farm animals and fire protection –wetting property | -complaints about poor aesthetic quality of the pipe water supply e.g. staining, silty, calcium and variable chlorine levels<br>-need more information about town water system, flushing process and water quality testing<br>-residents with private wells (within municipality) with good quality water do not want to be forced to hook up to Town supply<br>-poor quality water add cost to home systems e.g. additional chemicals for cleaning, maintenance, lower life cycle of appliances, etc.<br>-upgrades to Town fill point | -source protection plan for well heads (Town supply) and watershed including contamination mapping<br>-Well Program expanded to within Town boundaries<br>-develop comprehensive educational materials about water source protection, supply, maintenance etc.<br>--public education re: water source protection, how to flush hot water tanks, true costs of water, well maintenance & record keeping package, well construction and upgrades and why chlorine is used |
| Whitehorse North (Grizzly Valley, Jackfish Bay, Shallow Bay, Mayo Road, Hotsprings Road) | -private deep water wells<br>-water delivery<br>-self serve from Gruberville, Whitehorse | -range of well depths reported from 200' - >800' (water never reached)<br>-most water is hard – evidence of calcification, some "sulfur" smell and taste<br>-in Gruberville, water is reportedly good tasting | -lack of knowledge of options and choice for potable water access<br>-water delivery price variable<br>-cost of drinking water is a major consideration for rural residents<br>-individual well owners have to be made aware that they are tapped into a public resource and are also responsible for its management | -a properly located self-serve community well would provide enough choice to residents<br>-commercial well is of interest but would require assurance of reduced delivery rates and possible impact on local aquifer<br>-need public education re: well drilling and risks, maintenance, storage tank cleaning, source protection and management<br>-focus on education first; don't over-regulate but YG should require submission of well logs |

**APPENDIX A: Consultation Brochure**

# Rural Public Drinking Water Access Consultation


source source source

# Developing a Public Drinking Water Access Strategy for Rural Yukon

### Consultation Focus

**As our communities have grown and developed over time, pressure on our existing water infrastructure has increased and gaps in service have developed. This consultation is geared to identifying the gaps and ensuring rural Yukoners have affordable access to public drinking water.**

### Guiding Principles

1. Yukoners should have access to safe and affordable drinking water.
2. The Yukon Government recognizes and respects the roles of all levels of government and the private sector in the provision of public drinking water.
3. Community input is critical to determining the best solutions to address drinking water infrastructure needs.
4. Yukoners should know the true costs of water to promote conservation.

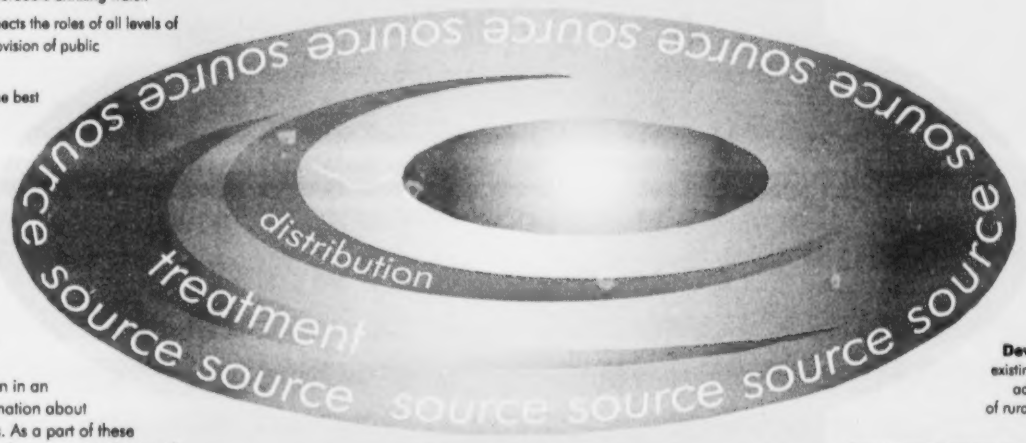
### Who's Involved?

Managing public drinking water is a cooperative effort between all levels of government, industry and various stakeholders, including individual Yukoners.

Community Services is leading this consultation in an effort to generate discussion and gather information about public drinking water access for rural residents. As a part of these consultations, we are meeting on a community-by-community basis with:

- Yukoners
- First Nations water managers
- Municipalities
- Industry representatives

*Where DIAND plays a role, officials from that department will participate in consultation.*


source source source source source source source source source source
distribution
treatment
source source source source source source source source source source

**Look for a schedule of public meetings in the Friday editions of local papers or on the web at www.gov.yk.ca/depts/community**

### What we need from you

Simply put, we want your ideas and input for what your community currently has and what it will need in the future.

- What level of access to public drinking water exists in your community?
- What works with the current water access options options in your community?
- What needs improvement?
- What do you see as government's role in providing public drinking water?
- Do you have any ideas about water access issues that you want to share?

### Steps along the way

**Consultation** - Listen to rural Yukoners about their needs and their expectations. Use feedback to develop "What We Heard" document to be available to the general public. (February to April 2005)

**Develop Strategy** - Using community input to improve existing technical knowledge, develop a strategy to begin addressing the long-term drinking water access needs of rural Yukoners Provide strategy document to the public. (Spring/Summer 2005)

**Implement strategy community-by-community** - Focus on implementing strategy to sustain or improve rural public drinking water access.(2005-2009)

**CONTACT:**

**If you want to provide written comment, please send an email to waterstrategy@gov.yk.ca.**